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CONSISTENT BRICKWORK—I

By GEORGE J. JERVIS



SO much has been written on the antiquity of brick that it might also be excusable if that interest which was aroused by the record of its achievements in the past became torpid in so far as it affected its possibilities in the immediate present.

Architects and designers from time to time have embodied in their architectural schemes some specially treated detail in brick; but this has been more often in the nature of a copy of ancient practice rather than a creative purpose of new and advanced ideas. Stone, beneath the attack of the mason's chisel, has responded to the decorative schemes of the architect's brain and has embodied new and refreshing designs in its smaller details; but its larger masses, while varying as to architectural outline, must necessarily be limited to its individual and prevailing shade of color. Brick, whose units are so much more pliable and whose shades of color so much more diverse, notwithstanding its splendid heredity in those magnificent monuments handed down to us through stress of untold ages, has had, in this country until comparatively recent years, so little if any thought expended upon its treatment that it not only seemed relegated to a sub-

servient position, but its very life seemed threatened as a decorative building material.

The causes for this condition are nothard to find. Speaking generally they are two: the fault of the architect and the indifference of the manufacturer. The fault of the architect lies in not demanding and insisting on an artistic product and the fault of the manufacturer rests in not catering to the wants and requirements of the architect.

Brickwork has been erected in different parts of the country without any apparent thought or idea expended upon it other than the mere selection of a particular shade of brick, and even that shade has often been decided upon by the process of selecting one out of a dozen bricks laid for inspection upon the architect's office table instead of viewing its general effect in constructed brickwork.

Details such as style of bond, color and thickness of joint—points so essential to the tone of the finished brick field—have been in many cases left to the tender mercies of the builder and mason, who are far more concerned in the construction and cost than in the decorative side of the job in hand. The result of such action has been effects in brickwork

which might have been equally well obtained by a painter's brush and straight-edge; for apart from the monotonous recurrence of Flemish and American Running bond, the one and sole idea as to mortar joints seemed



THE CLAY MINE IN THE HILLSIDE

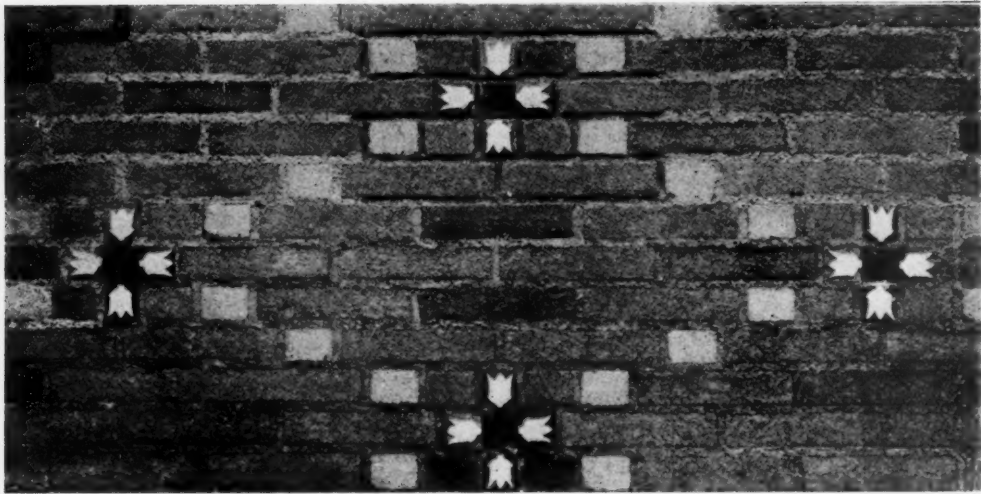


FIG. 1.—A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE BEST MORTAR JOINT FOR THE LOTUS CLUB, NEW YORK
This panel is built with three different mixtures of mortar and finished partly "raked out" and partly "rough cut flush." Notice (even in the picture) how a variation of mortar alters the whole appearance of the brickwork. Unfortunately this spotted effect is seen too often in a finished building.

to be that of the widest contrast—either glaring white or funereal black; but never by any chance a mortar the color of which harmonizes with the prevailing shade of the brick themselves.

Is it small wonder then, that under conditions such as these, that brick with which our ancestors fashioned their "homes," "civic buildings," palaces and their tombs, should take on such an unsightly garb or that a building material

so pregnant with possibilities should, under such sorry treatment, be so barren in its results? In some cases manufacturers seem to have gone out of their way to manufacture brick of unattractive and inartistic shades. The rough green clay itself as we find it in the hill or tunnel is at least harmonious with its immediate surroundings; and considering the possibilities of the manufacturer's art, there should be no reason why the finished product should be of a shade not only unattractive, but in some cases almost repellant. We have unhesitatingly placed the fault of these conditions upon the architect and the manufacturer, for the client, except in a few cases, is exempt from condemnation; indeed his position towards the architect and manufacturer resembles that of a patient to his physician and druggist. The druggist gives him what the doctor orders.

Let us take the case of the architect first. He may complain and indeed often does, that the manufacturer does not give him what he wants and the somewhat pertinent question arises, does he know what he wants? Does the

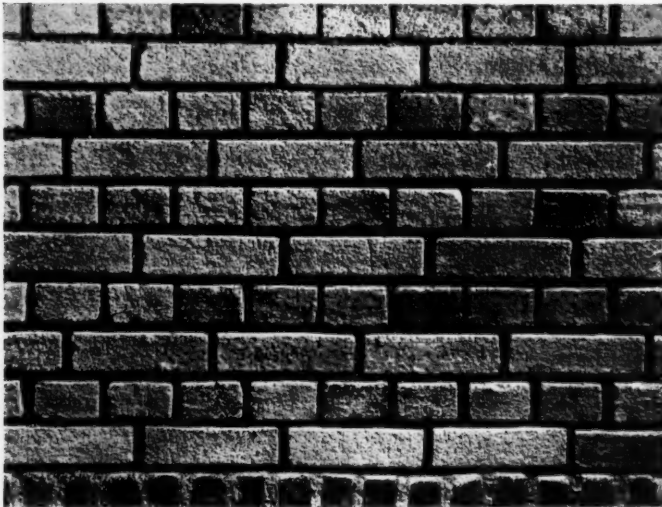


FIG. 2.—DUTCH CROSS BOND

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average architect give sufficient study to brick treatment to know what texture, color of mortar and style of bond is most suitable to the class of building he is plan-

we do not mean a vivid colored joint of white or black, the use of either of which tends to give a whitewash or paintbrush effect; but a tone in keeping or good contrast

with the brick it surrounds, for indeed from actual experiments with different colored mortars it has been found that an absolutely different tone is imparted to the brick field by a slight variation in the mortar formula and a brick wall of any shade may be brightened or subdued in tone by the use of a warm or cold gray joint.

The above is merely a statement of simple facts and it is the earnest opinion of the writer that if the architect would pay one-third of the attention to mortar joints that he does to the selection of the brick, the result would make for a better and more consistent brickwork generally.

One of the most artistic bonds is that of the "Dutch" (Fig. 2) often mistaken by the average layman for "English" bond (Fig. 3), but differing in the fact that through the stretchers

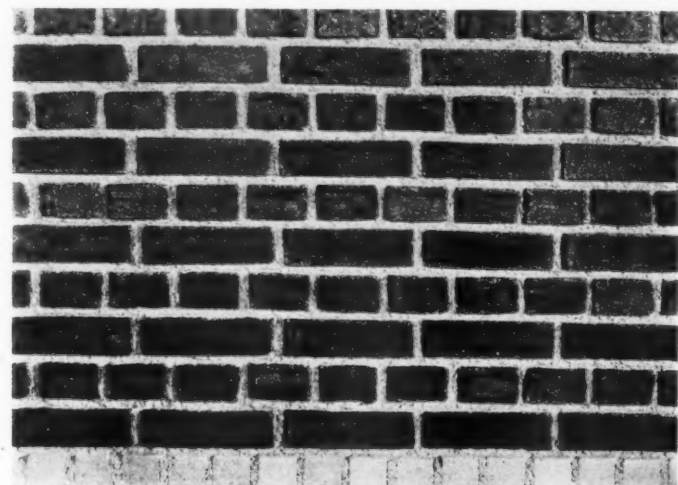


FIG. 3.—ENGLISH BOND

ning? Is he not too often content to call for some particular shade of brick from its position as a single unit rather than a component of a main resultant, and, in wasting both his own and the manufacturer's time in quibbling over a slight difference in the shade of a single sample, lose sight of the fact that even if the manufacturer was able to serve him with 10,000 bricks, each absolutely of the same exact shade, in the end the whole surface of the brick field becomes a composite of which the mortar joint is a most important if not a controlling feature?

The method of darkening the shade of the brick field by the use of raked joints is so common a practice that it need not be discussed in this instance. Our illustration (Fig. 1) shows a panel laid up for experimental purposes with varying shades of mortar finished partly raked and rough cut flush and shows the different tones occasioned by the several mortar mixtures. If this difference is to be noticed in a monotoned illustration, how much more would it be so in the brickwork itself when each shade of color would have its proper value. When we speak of different color

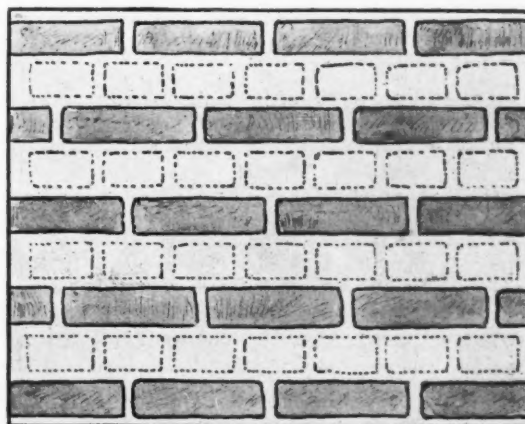


FIG. 4. Note:—The headers are indicated by dotted lines in order to show relative position of stretchers in Dutch bond. In English bond, the stretchers are directly over one another.

breaking joint every other course (Fig. 4), those artistic diagonal lines of vertical joints appear which give so much character to the field; and here is a very



FIG. 6

important point, for although as regards the brick field, the color of the brick is the essential point; yet, in the question of the bond, it is the joint which tells. Red, or dark-colored brick, laid up with a dark mortar or raked joints on the one hand, or gray or light colored brick laid up with a light gray mortar with flush joints, although carefully erected in "Dutch" bond, would be, at a short distance, absolutely indistinguishable from "English" or Flemish bond, so that although you are undoubtedly dependent upon your shade of brick for your general color scheme, when you come to the finish and veneer of your brick field you are dependent entirely upon your bond and mortar joint. An example of this is to be noticed in our illustration (Fig. 5); for while the architect is to be congratulated on his design, the mason by raking the mortar joints has destroyed the characteristic features of the "Dutch" bond, which are seen to much better advantage in Fig. 6.

In Fig. 7 we have an interesting example of an experiment with flush and raked joints in the same building, the brick used in this instance was a gray rough textured brick with a range of several shades, laid with a rough mortar suitable to the texture of the brick themselves.

The beauty of a painting depends upon its expression of Nature's coloring and one need not be an art critic to realize that the color of the grass or foliage can not be reproduced by one solid green color; nor the azure of the sky by one mixture of blue.

Pick but one leaf and note the several shades of color which help to make up its soft green hue. Examine the bark of a tree and learn of what innumerable shades it is composed. Were the natural colors around us hard monotoned shades, the continuous strain upon the eye would be unendurable and it is the many different and pleasing shades in Nature's handiwork which are so restful to the sense of sight. If then this is Nature's rule, it should be man's rule also. God made the country; man made the town, and from that very fact the responsibility of man is great.

In the case of every single building which is erected, the architect is not only responsible to his client but to his fellowman who through force of circumstance is an inhabitant of the town or district in which that building is erected. Its style of architecture may and often will be criticised by those who are in a position to do so; but its general shade of color will allot it a place in the community either as a unit in the general surroundings or as an eyesore to the vicinity. *Whether the brick used be smooth or rough surface, let them vary in tone.* If there was something to be gained in the nature of a pleasing result by the use of a monotoned brick, there would be some excuse for the architect who insisted on specifying it and for the manufacturer who made herculean efforts to produce it, but with no artistic attributes to recommend it, it is more than surprising to find isolated cases where it is called for in architects' specifications.

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The artistic brickwork in Europe was erected in days when in all probability no questions arose as to rejection of brick either on account of size or shade, and even if such was not the case, we are not interested in the appearance of each particular building at the time of its erection; but we are interested in its appearance to-day when the combined and concentrated efforts of time and weather have so softened and toned its surface that it has become a

every reason to presume that the supervising architect left most of the individual detail to the workman himself who knew the possibilities and limits of that particular material in which he worked.

These conditions are existant in a general sense to-day with the exception of the brick manufacturers, who, except in rare cases, seem content to submit a mere sample of their product without any apparent thought as to the conditions under which it will

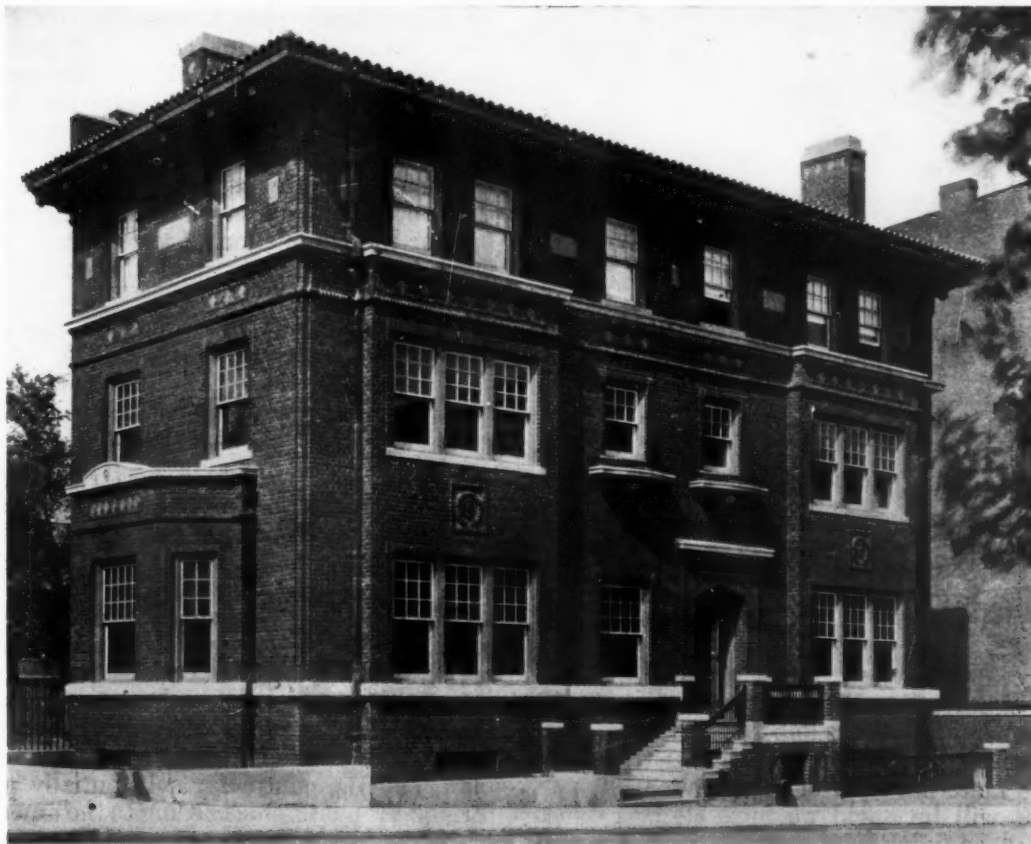


FIG. 5

very harmonious and artistic part of its natural surroundings.

Much of the beauty of detail in old time architecture is due to the painstaking efforts of the individual craftsman. In many of the old sixteenth century manor halls of England the carved timbers show the initials of the carpenter or wood carver who executed them. These were the days of craftsmen, for at this era, plans, as we know them, were non-existent and there is

show to the best advantage. You will say that the architect has only to examine the numerous photographs and illustrations of some of the best known brickwork of history. True, but go to the nearest architectural library and search some of the best known works on historical brickwork and see how much information is to be obtained on the actual brickwork itself; occasionally you will find the color of the brick mentioned; but the size of the units, bond, par-

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ticular shade, size of joints, color of mortar, all details of the utmost importance, are invariably passed over as if they did not matter.

If it is the duty of the architect to acquaint himself with this information on brick, is it not the duty of the brick manufacturer to know this also, so that armed with the knowledge of what has been and can be done with his product, he may merit the confidence of his architect in being prepared



FIG. 7

to supply his demands in an intelligent manner and to assume the position of an expert in brick treatment rather than that of a mere purveyor of brick units?

It will be noted we have spoken somewhat candidly of the position of the architect as regards his demands upon the manufacturer as to his methods of fulfilling such requirements, for, if it is true that the architect in the past has been content with too little thought as to the general appearance of his brickwork, it is equally true that the manufacturer has taken little trouble to alter the condition of affairs.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

CONTRACTOR'S RECOVERY ON COMPLETION OF WORK BY OWNER

The contractor for the erection of a house for a lump sum suspended work on account of illness. He arranged with the owner that the latter should employ labor to finish the building and that the contractor would reimburse him for the expense. This, it was held, did not mean that the owner became the contractor's agent for hiring men to complete the contract. The contractor could not recover the contract price and leave the owner to establish by independent means the claim he might have for disbursements to complete the work required to be done under the contract. He could only recover for the contract price less what the owner paid out for the completion of the contract and what he had already paid the contractor on account.

Owen v. Button, Massachusetts Supreme Court, 210 Mass. 219, 96 N. E. 333.

FAILURE TO AMEND PLANS

A contractor agreed to perform certain work according to the owner's plans and specifications. The contract contained a clause that "substantial performance" should be satisfactory to the owners, if satisfactory to "departments and architects." The owner agreed to an amendment of the plans in certain particulars if the tenement house department approved. The architect secured the approval of the tenement house department to an amended plan, and the contractor substantially performed the contract according to the amended plans. A violation was subsequently filed against the premises by the building department because of failure to amend the plans on file in the building department after the amendment was permitted by the tenement house department. It was held that such failure was no defense to an action by the contractor on the contract.

Zack v. Gans, 132 N. Y. Supp. 723.

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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE

WITH the annual convention of The American Institute of Architects to be held this year in Washington, D. C., only a few weeks off, it seems worth while to recall some of the accomplishments of this organization since the last Convention was adjourned. As a general assertion it may be stated that during this period, the various officers and committees have been actively engaged in upholding the standards of professional ethics and in securing to the profession without regard to affiliation with the Institute, the conservation of rights and the regulations of practice that tend inevitably toward improvement of conditions.

THE unwarranted assaults made upon the profession of architecture by men whose exalted public office should insure beyond doubt the possession of intelligence, education and culture, on the part of the incumbents, but which unfortunately does not under present conditions, have been promptly, though without sacrifice of dignity, repelled. That determined and vigorous efforts have not succeeded in preventing the repeal of the Tarsney Act, nor led to the substitution of one equally as good, has been in no sense the fault of the special committees of the Institute appointed to deal with the subject. Undoubtedly, how-

ever, the work of this Committee will be continued, until by reason of an aroused popular sentiment and a better knowledge of conditions by those in Congress, a measure will eventually be enacted and approved that will restore governmental architecture to the high place that it has occupied in the architecture of this country under the Act recently abrogated.

THE large measure of accomplishment of the Committee on Competitions is known throughout the profession. While the national legislative bodies may not yet have come to a realizing sense of the rights and dignities that surround the practice of architecture and are still unmindful of the fact that in competitive matters adherence to the Institute requirements conserves the interests of both the client and architect alike, it is gratifying to observe the many instances where state and municipal bodies, as well as individual owners and corporations, have with marked success conducted important competitions in accordance with the general requirements of the Competition Code, recommended by the Institute. An important instance might be noted in the Competition for the Missouri State Capitol just completed. Originally conceived in ignorance of the requirements of professional practice, although undoubtedly well-meant, the rules of competition were revised through the efforts of the Institute committee and the contest so directed that the result has been the acceptance of a design, the excellence of which is generally conceded. While the publicity given this competition has in a sense overshadowed many minor ones, there can be no doubt of the fact that the last ten months has resulted in a feeling shared by architects and to a considerable degree by the public generally, that no competition, large or small, not conducted in general conformity with the Institute Code will result in the fullest measure of success and satisfaction.

ANOTHER direction in which a committee of the Institute has done good service is in correcting misstatements concerning architectural subjects appearing from time to time in the public press. It has been realized that a proper public

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appreciation of architecture and the conditions underlying its production are dependent largely upon accurate knowledge. So long as misinformation and inaccuracies of statement are published without notice or correction on the part of those capable of detecting them, there is little hope of an appreciation of architecture or a knowledge of the rules which properly govern its practice becoming general. An effort to correct misstatements whenever made in the popular press and to furnish information of a reliable character to the public concerning these matters is one of the big undertakings of the past year. The results, while they will of course be gradual, can hardly fail to eventually be commensurate with the efforts put forth.

SIGNIFICANT of the work being done by the Committee on Education is the fact that it has attracted the attention of architects abroad. In fact the rapid advancement of good architecture in America has been attributed in large measure to the educational methods pursued by organizations of architects in this country. These methods to a considerable extent, under the fostering care of the Institute and administered by an efficient committee, have led in practice to a higher form of paternal-

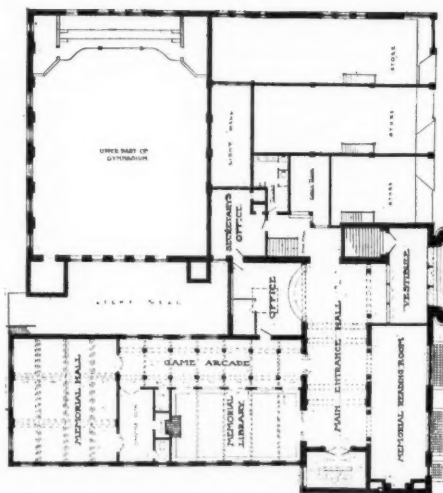
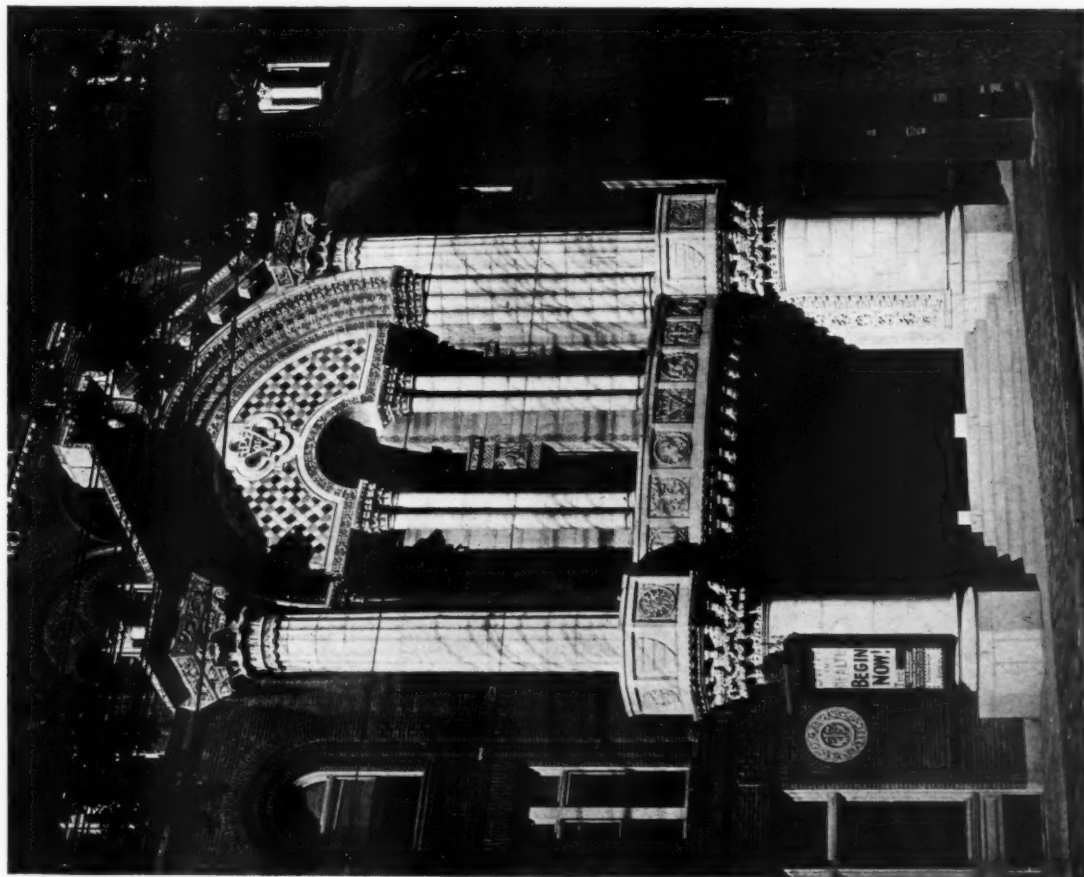
ism and have given to draughtsmen and the younger men in the profession a sense of security as to their future, and inestimable aid in their work.

TAKING the past year as a whole, it would seem that The American Institute of Architects has achieved results that have advanced the cause of good architecture in an unusual degree. That the work should be carried forward, should in fact be enlarged, is evident to none more than to those who have given so freely and unselfishly of their time and intelligence for the general good during the past year. That the progress made and the results achieved are also of benefit to non-Institute members of the profession as well as to the public, there can be no doubt. It is to be hoped therefore that the Institute will enjoy an increased membership as one of the results of its increased activity. Architects not affiliated with the Institute who are profiting by the improved conditions of practice and who share equally with Institute members the benefits accruing as a result of organized effort can scarcely justify a course that does not include loyal Institute support, which all will agree can best be given through active membership.

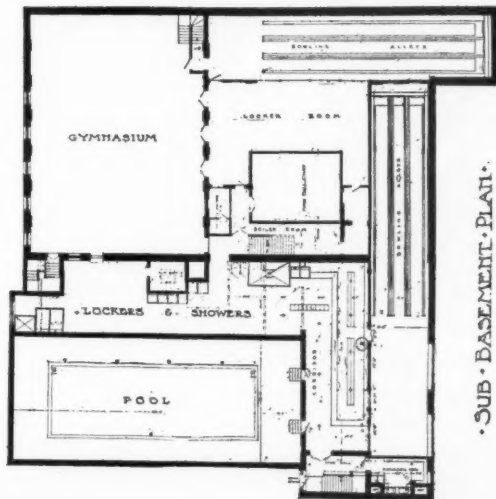




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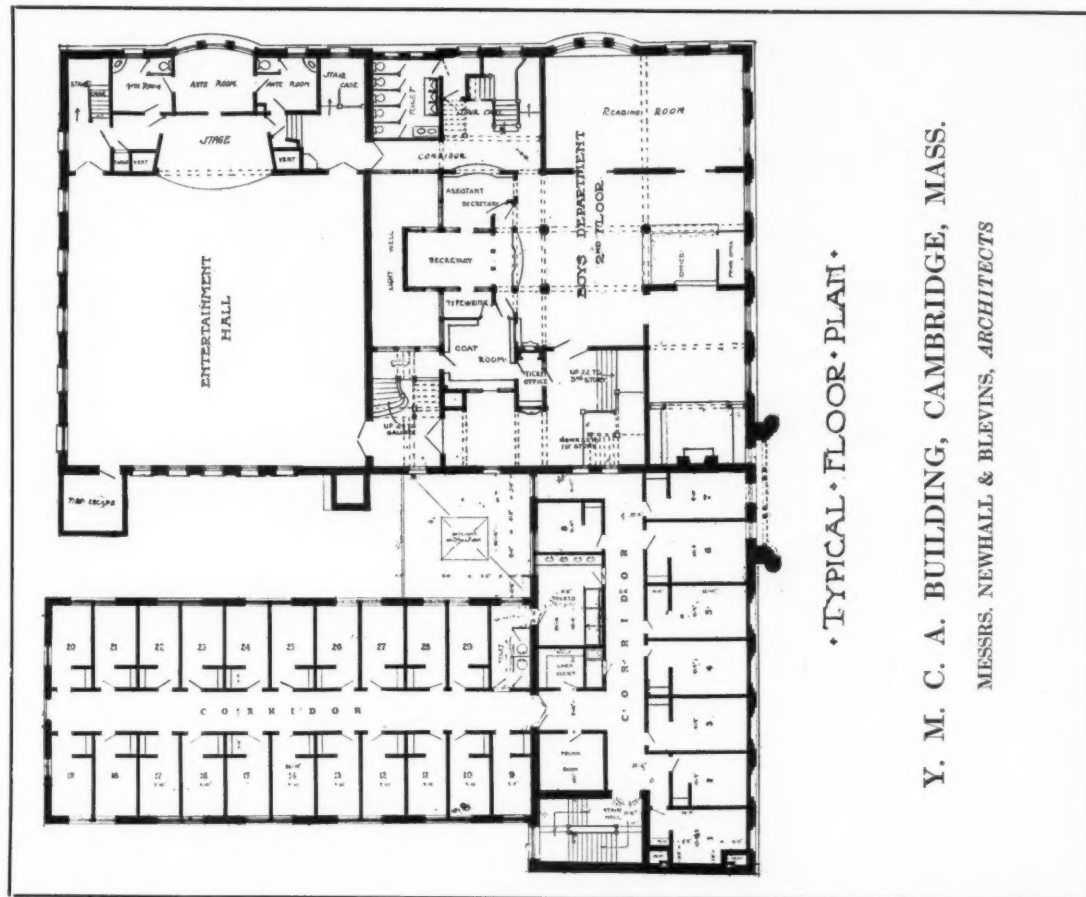
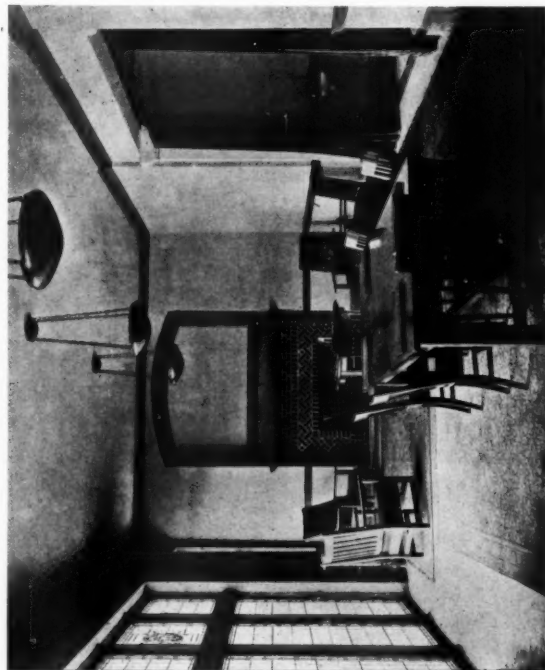


• FIRST FLOOR PLAN •



• SUB-BASEMENT PLAN •

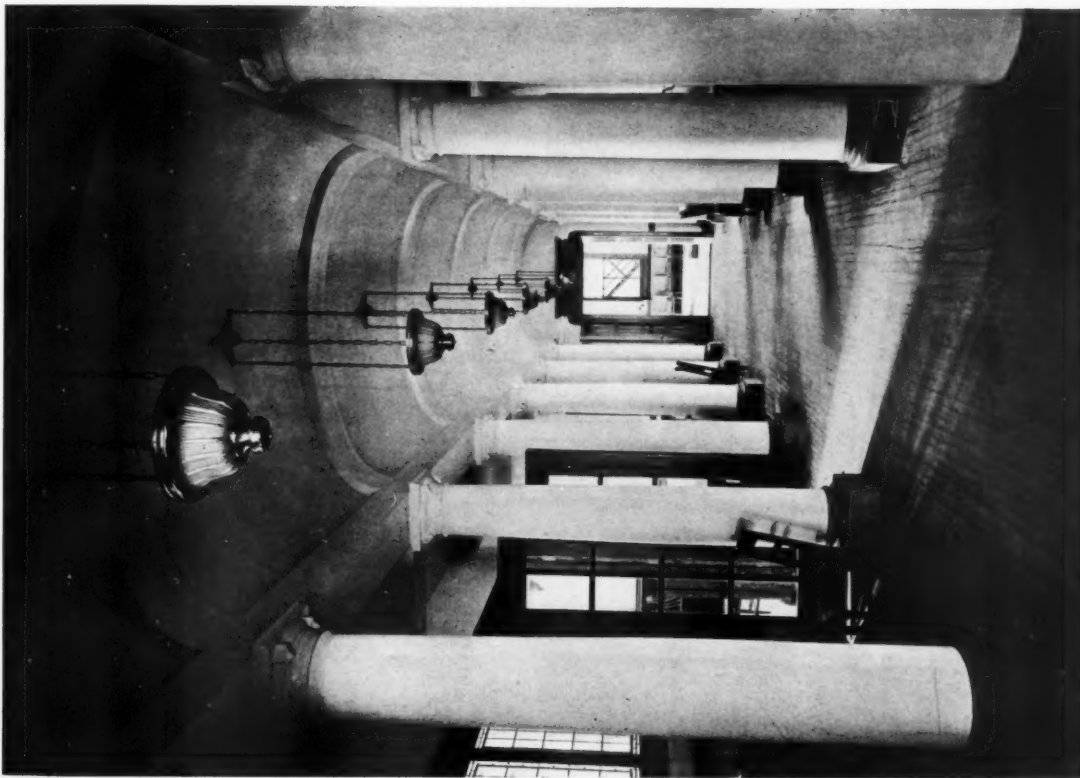
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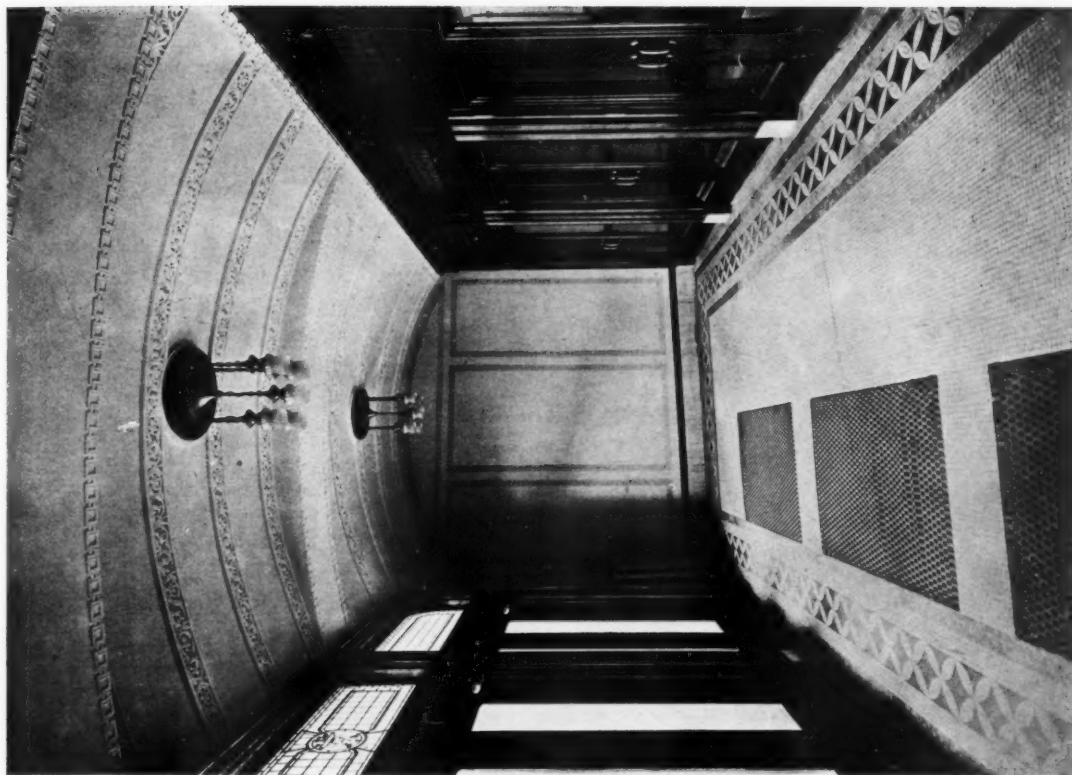
• TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN •

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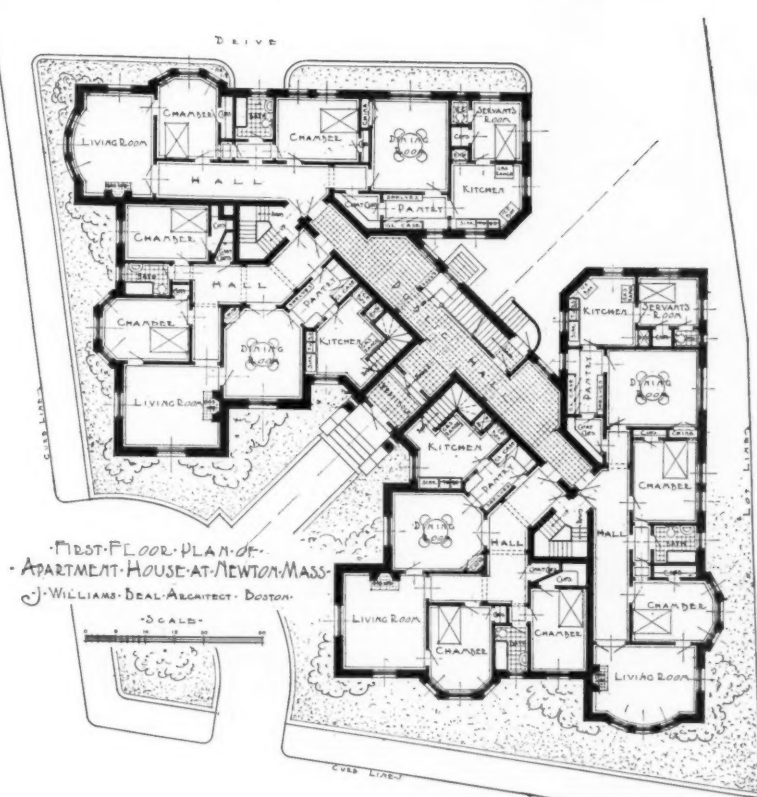
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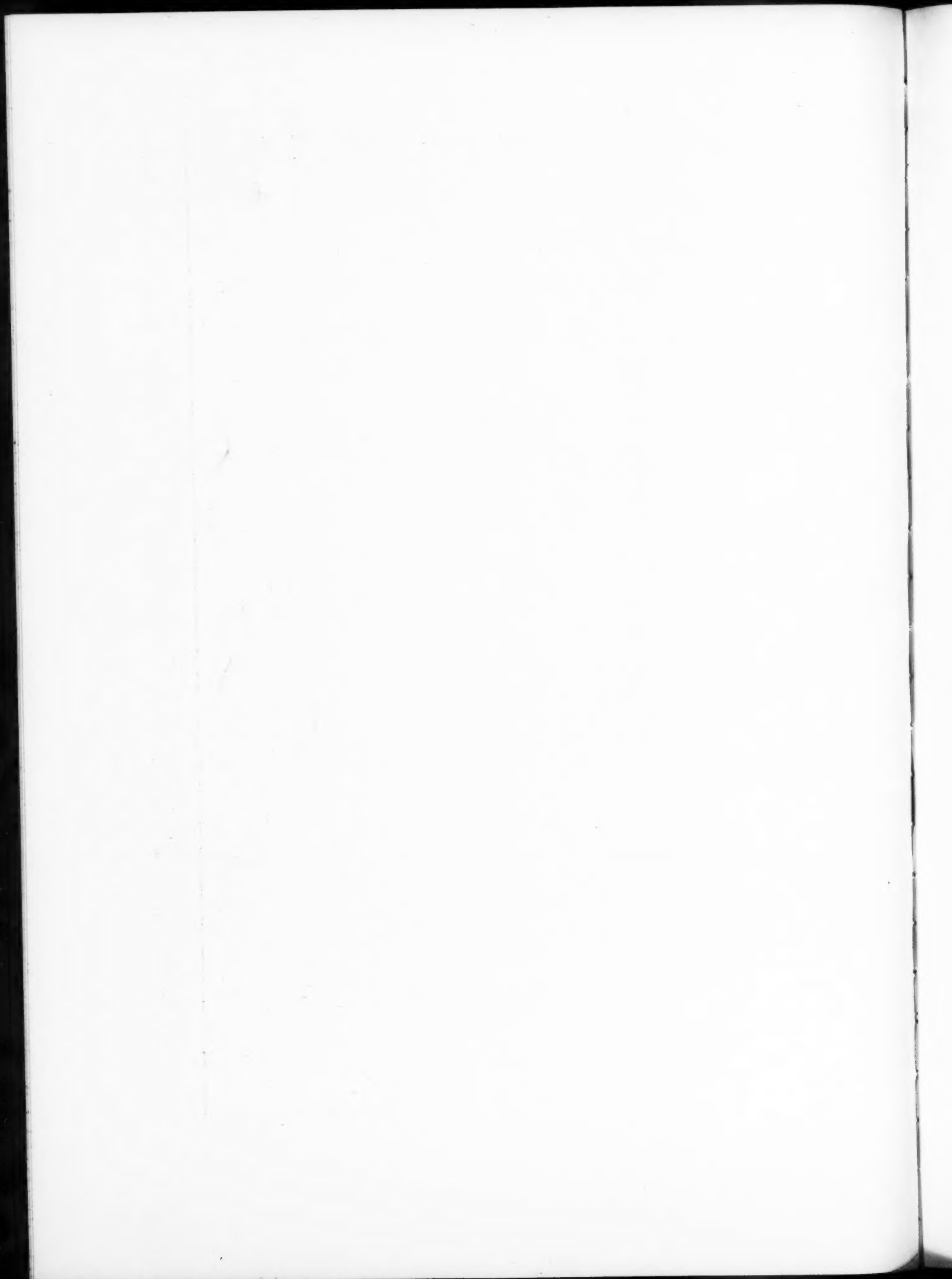


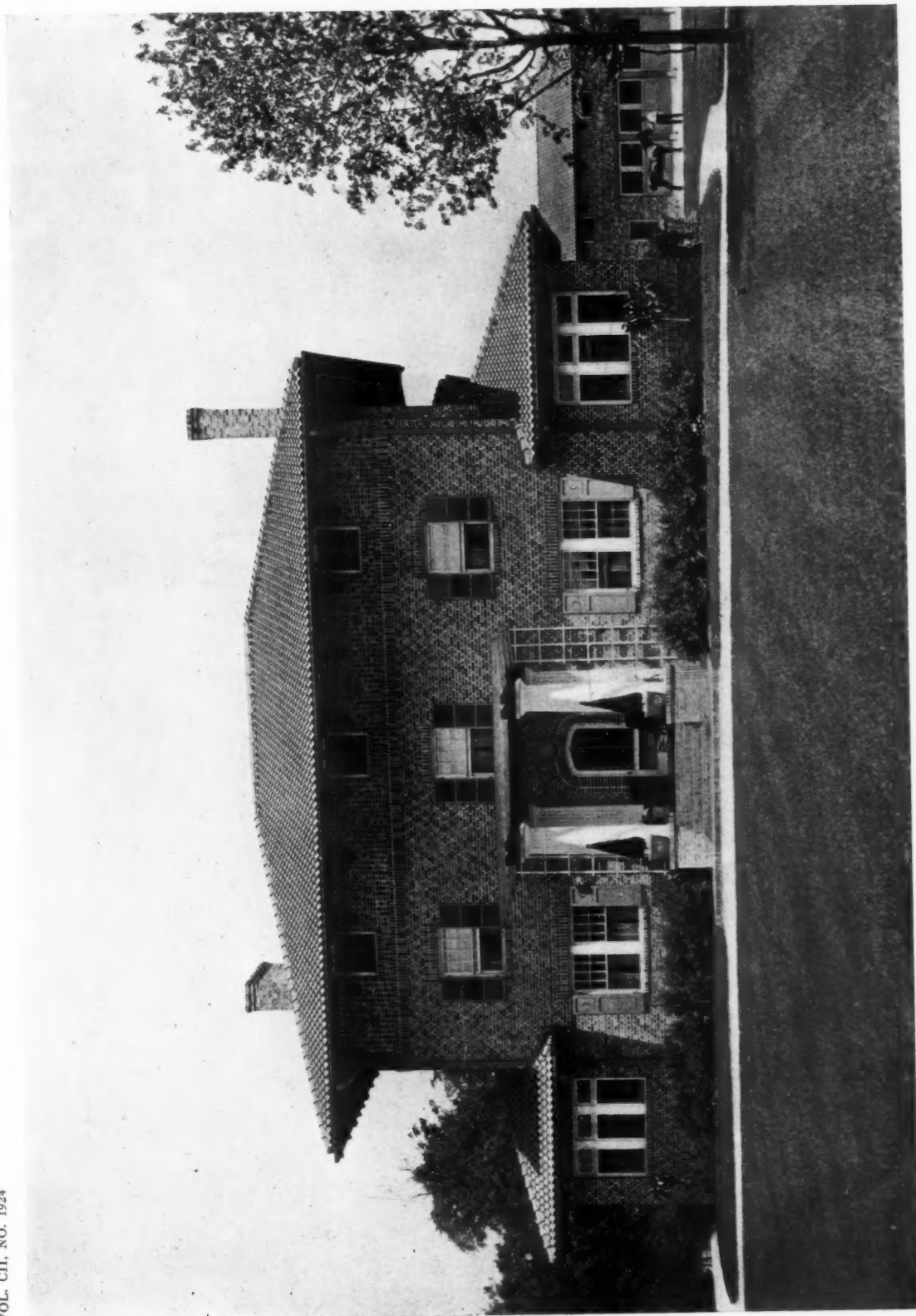
AN APARTMENT HOUSE IN NEWTON, MASS.

MR. J. WILLIAMS BEAL, ARCHITECT

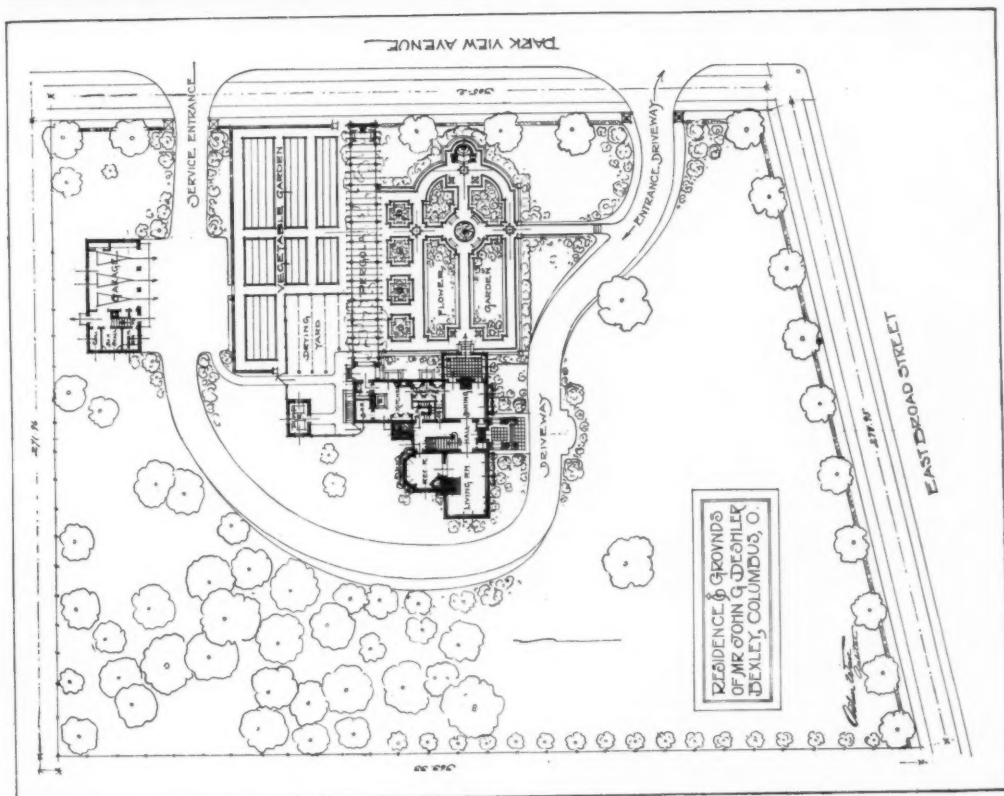


AN APARTMENT HOUSE AT NEWTON, MASS.
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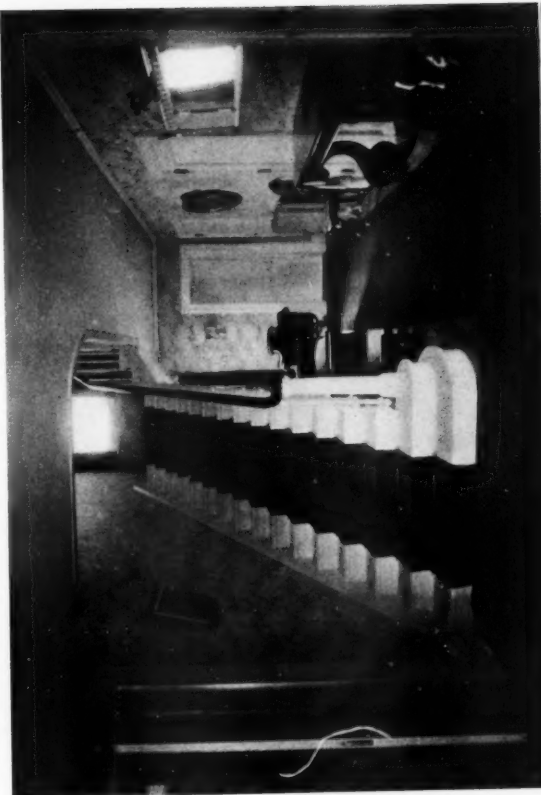




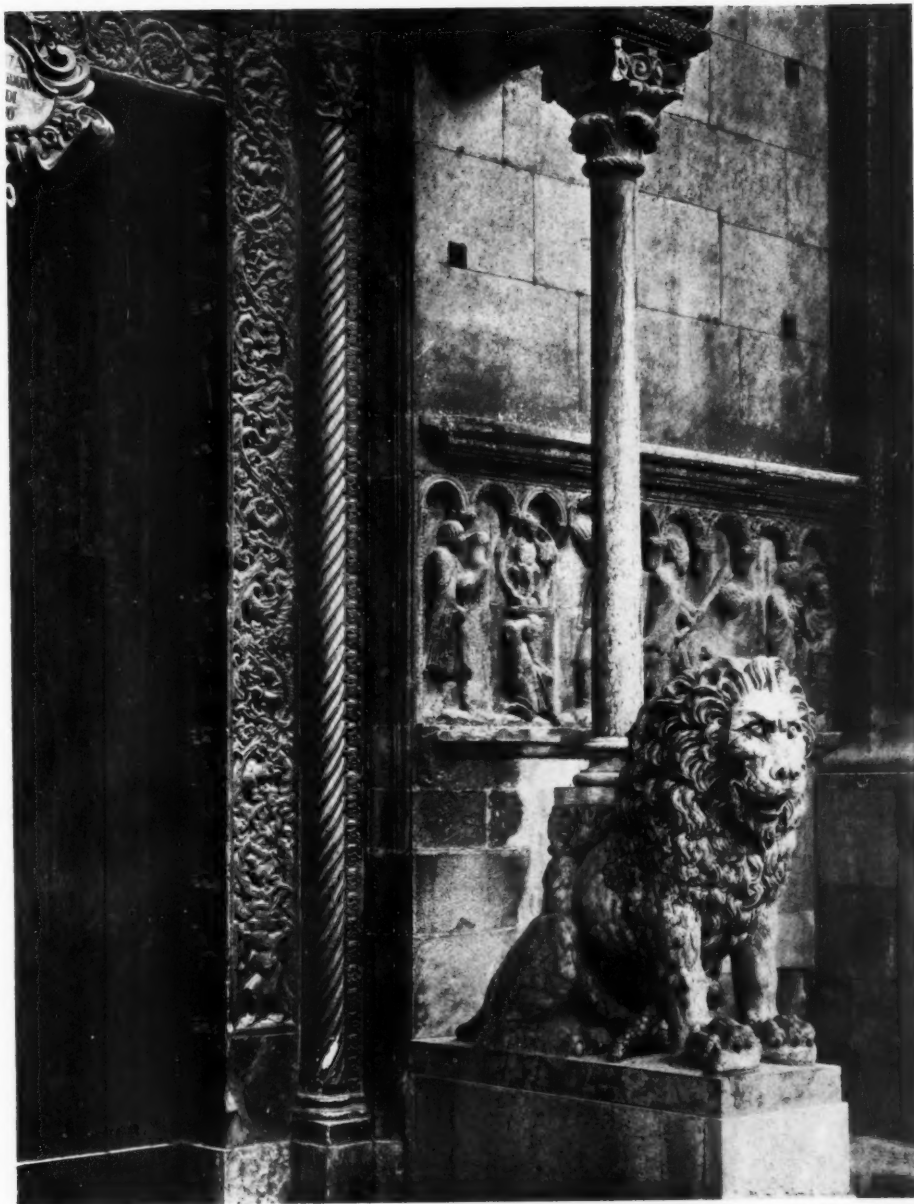
HOUSE OF MR. JOHN G. DESHLER, COLUMBUS, OHIO
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MR. ARTHUR WARE, ARCHITECT



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DETAIL OF PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE

THE CATHEDRAL, MODENA (XII CENTURY)